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Message Text

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21
ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 AID-05

/070 W

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R 250740Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5207
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCEUR

S E C R E T SANAA 698

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE, SA
SUBJECT RETURN OF YAR TO FULL CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT

1. SUMMARY. UNLIKELY YARG WILL RETURN TO FULL CIVILIAN RULE BEFORE END OF DECLARED TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (OCTOBER 22) AND PERHAPS NOT UNTIL SPRING OF 1976. CIVILIAN MODERNISTS PUSHING FOR ELIMINATION ABU LUHUM FACTION, BUT SINAN ABU LUHUM USING CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AHMAR'S SYMPATHY FOR FELLOW SHAIKH IN DEFENSE. AHMAR RESISTING SAG PRESSURE TO DRIP ABU LUHUM, SEEING, WE BELIEVE, PERSONAL ADVANTAGE IN USING OJM TO KEEP PRESIDENT HAMDI OFF BALANCE.

2. FROM RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENCY LEGAL ADVISER HUSAIN AL-HUBAISHI AND MINSTATE AHMAD SA'ID, IT APPEARS TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF RULE BY COMMAND COUNCIL MAY CONTINUE THROUGH 1975 AND PERHAPS INTO EARLY 1976. ACCORDING TO PRESENT TIMETABLE, "TRASITIONAL PERIOD" IS DJU TO END OCTOBER 22, 1975 AND WILL THUS HAVE TO BE

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EXTENDED BY COMMAND COUNCIL DECREE.

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2. HABAISHI, WHO IS STRONG BELIEVER IN RULE OF LAW,
TOLD DCM MARCH 13, THAT THERE NOW NO PARTICULAR HURRY TO
RETURN TO FULL CIVILIAN RULE. PRESIDENT HAMDI AND LEADERSHIP
WERE PLEASED WITH POPULAR RESPONSE TO ABD AL-GHANI CABINET AND
PREFERRED PERIOD OF STABILITY BEFORE TRIGGERING RESUMPTION OF
INTENSE POLITICAL BARGAINING THAT NEGOTIATIONS OVER FORM AND
COMPOSITION OF NEW CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE AND HOLDING OF NEW
CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WOULD BRING. ELECTIONS THIS
SPRING WERE IN ANY CASE OUT OF QUESTIONS, SINCE ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE HAD NOT YET FINISHED NEW ELECTION LAW. ONCE IT DID,
YARG WOULD NEED THREE MONTHS OR MORE TO PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS.
HUBAISHI DID NOT LOOK FOR RETURN TO FULL CIVILIAN RULE BEFORE
OCTOBER 22 AT EARLIEST AND EXPECTED IT WOULD NOT OCCUR BEFORE
END OF YEAR.

3. SAID, IN SUBSEQUENT COVERSATION WITH DCM MARCH 22, ELUCIDATED.
YARG WAS STILL HAVING PROBLEMS WITH SHAIKH SINAN ABU LUHUM WHO
HAD APPEALED TO ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SHAIKH ABDALLAH
AL-AHMAR, AS FELLOW SHAIKH, TO SUPPORT HIM AGAINST WHAT HE TERMED
"ANTI-TRIBAL ELEMENTS" LED BY FONMIN ASNAG AND SA'ID. AT YARG
REQUEST, SAG HAD ALREADY URGED AL-AHMAR TO RESIST ABU LUHUM'S
BLANDISHMENTS, WHICH WERE CLEARLY DESIGNED TO CAUSE TROUBLE BETWEEN
AL-AHMAR AND PRESIDENT HAMDI. SINCE THIS INTERVENTION HAD NOT WORKED,

DESPITE A STRONG APPROACH BY SAG, SAID INDICATED
SAG WOULD BE RE-
QUESTED TO MAKE SECOND ATTEMPT TO BRING AL-AHMAR AROUND. UNTIL
PROBLEM OF ABU LUHUMS SETTLED ONCE AND FOR ALL, SA'ID HAD
RECOMMENDED STRONGLY TO HAMDI THAT YARG NOT RISK POLITICAL
TURBULENCE THAT ENDING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WOULD ENTAIL IF
ABU LUHUMS STILL ACTIVE. HE DID NOT LOOK FOR ITS END UNTIL
LAST OF 1975 OR PERHAPS SPRING OF 1976.

4. ACCORDING SAID, FOCUS OF ANTI-ABU LUHUM EFFORTS IS TO STRIP
THEIR MILITARY POWER BY REMOVING THREE ABU LUHUMS IN COMMAND
POSITIONS -- LTC ALI WHO COMMANDS ASIFA ELITE FORCE, LTC
MUHUMMAD WHO COMMANDS SIXTH ARMORED BRIGADE, AND LTC DIRHAM, COMMAND
COUNCIL MEMBER AND TAIZ AREA COMMANDER. ACHIEVING THIS WILL
DEPEND ON SUPPORT OF AL-AHMAR BEFORE HAMDI COULD BE CONVINCED
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TIME WAS RIPE.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOTED IN PREVIOUS MESSAGES BANEFUL INFLUENCE
OF FAST-THINKING SHAIKH SINAN OVER LESS CLEVER AND SOMEWHAT ERRATIC
SHAIKH ABDALLAH. HOWEVER WE BELIEVE THAT SHAIKH ABDALLAH, WHO NOT
ALL THAT DUMB, SEES OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE OF KEEPING ABU LUHUMS IN
POLITICAL GAME TO KEEP HAMDI AND HIS SUPPORTERS OFF-BALANCE AND
GIVE CONSEQUENT ADVANTAGE TO SHAIKH ABDALLAH'S POSITION. WHAT

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CENTRIST MODERNISTS LIKE ASNAG AND SA'ID WANT IS TO END
JUST THIS KIND OF POLITICAL GAMESMANSHIP WHICH HAMPERS POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY. THEY WILL CERTAINLY NOT
FIND IT EASY TO END THIS SYSTEM WHICH HAS GROWN UP SINCE 1962
REVOLUTION, MEANS WHEREBY SHAIKHS HAVE GAINED DEGREE OF INFLUENCE
OVER CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DENIED THEM BEFORE 1962 BY IMAM AHMAD.
SCOTES

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